

a progressive Canadian newsmagazine

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BRIARPATCH

Volume 29, Number 9

November 2000

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FROM WACKENHUT TO WALKERTON

ONTARIO'S PLANS
TO PRIVATIZE PRISONS

WTO ♣ U.S. Corporate-Nazi Connection ♣ Who Killed M.L.K.?

NEWS FROM LABOR NOTES

Labor Notes, a great labour publication from Detroit, had a number of interesting tidbits in a recent issue. Here's three morsels of information you probably didn't know:

"By a unanimous city council vote, Durham, North Carolina has become the first Southern city to adopt a strong ordinance prohibiting the city from buying or renting uniforms or other clothing made in sweatshops."

"Hundreds of workers at the Dutch Joint Administration Office, the agency that handles unemployment insurance in the Netherlands, faced layoff recently because so few people were out of work. The country's 2.7 percent unemployment rate is due, in part, to a shorter work week. Dutch workers average 1,370 hours on the job per year, compared with 1,996 for American workers."

"Most of the defective Firestone tires which have been linked to at least 62 deaths and 100 injuries were made by replacement workers at the company's Decatur, Illinois plant during the 1994-96 United Steelworkers strike/lockout. According to the *Washington Post*, former workers at the plant say that quality control procedures during that period were questionable."

Labor Notes is must reading for every trade unionist and trade union in Canada. Subscriptions cost US\$20 per year. Labor Notes, 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48210. Phone (313) 842-6262. www.labornotes.org

SCHOOL OF ASSASSINS

This year's SOA Watch vigil at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia is being held from November 17-19. SOA Watch also announces a new SOA video exploring the links between the SOA, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and corporate exploitation in Latin America. For more information contact SOA Watch at www.soaw.org or contact Bud Godderis at godderis@netidea.com

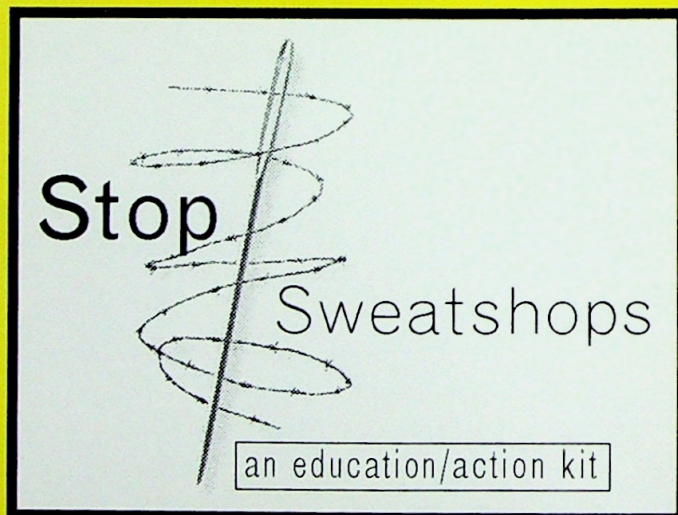


SAY NO TO SWEATSHOPS

The good people at Maquila Solidarity Network have an interesting array of books and T-shirts for sale. *Stop Sweatshops: An Education/Action Kit* is meant for teachers, students, union members and church groups that want to get involved in campaigns to stop sweatshops. It only costs \$12.50 (including postage). *Briarpatch* will review this kit in an upcoming issue.

Another interesting item is *Women Behind the Labels: Worker Testimonies from Central America*. This collection of interviews with maquila and banana plantation workers illustrates the real lives of the workers hidden beneath the mainstream media's headlines. It costs \$5.

The MSN also offers union-made T-shirts and tank tops featuring the barbed-wire and needle design from the Stop Sweatshops kit. Their clothing line makes a dramatic point and looks good too. The back features the slogan "Stop Sweatshops" and



a mock MSN label. The T-shirt is available in S, M, L, in blue, khaki, and stone. Also available in M and L in orange. Tank tops available in S, M, L, in light grey. The price is only \$15. Available from MSN, 606 Shaw St, Toronto, ON M6G 3L6. Phone: (416) 532-8584. E-mail: info@maquilasolidarity.org

CUBAN AMBASSADOR'S VISIT

Briarpatch, along with a large group of organizations in Regina and Saskatoon, is pleased to announce that Carlos Fernandez, the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, will visit Saskatchewan from November 13-17. For more information, please see our ad inside the magazine or visit our web site.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Briarpatch welcomes Michelle Beveridge, Norma Greene and Laurie Hergott to the Board of Directors.

Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

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OFF THE TOP

You'll be pleased with this latest issue of *Briarpatch*. It's an interesting array of articles on a broad range of topics. Among them is a short piece called "Dirty Laundry," about a group of women around the world who are helping to break the silence to end violence against women. Part of the project was a march to the Manitoba Legislature as part of the World March of Women activities around the globe.

Martin Wooldridge's article "The Drums of Africa Beat for Racial Tolerance," is the story of Daniel Kasongo's quest to find suitable employment in Regina, and the racism and intolerance he encountered. After his experiences, Kasongo moved back to Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo). As Wooldridge writes, Kasongo is now trying "to rebuild his life in a country that continues to be notoriously undemocratic and unstable."

Then Paul Bobier takes Mike Harris and his "No Sense Revolution" to task in "No Ticket to Prosperity." Harris and his minions are working their butts off to destroy the Ontario labour movement by reforming the province's labour legislation. Forget about the 40 hour work week. How about a 60 hour work week? How about changes to scheduling your vacations? How about no raises to the province's minimum wage? But working people in Ontario aren't the only ones who will be hurt by this legislation. Other provinces will no doubt gaze fondly at Mad Mike's mayhem and seek to reproduce the Darth Vader-like Tory miracle.

Speaking of Darth Vader, Bill Gates flew in a plane-load of his geeks to Nuvavut in a vain attempt to get the people of North to join the cyber revolution. Derek Rasmussen's article touches on many issues relating to colonialism. (By the way, Bill's cyber troops left the North disappointed).

Charlie Angus zeros in on the Ontario Tory government's plans to privatize prisons by allowing U.S. corporations to operate in the province. The prisons-for-profit industry is a multi-

billion dollar business in the U.S. and it's coming to Canada soon unless we fight back.

Just when I thought I had an idea of what the WTO was up to, Jim Stanford floored me with his piece on a recent WTO ruling: The Japanese are going to have to learn to drive on the other side of the road, and if they don't like it, too bad. He quotes one top U.S. trade official who wants all foreigners "to think like Americans, act like Americans, and - most of all - shop like Americans."

Sally Johnson's "Lest We Forget" tells us about all the rotten things that U.S. corporations did to help the Nazis before, during and after World War II. We publish this piece in November in honour of Remembrance Day.

It is with great sadness that we publish Michelle Kowalski's article about the recent death of Brian Rohatyn. Brian was one of those true internationalists who worked tirelessly in solidarity with Cuba. We can all learn a great deal from Brian's activism and dedication.

Asad Ismi, one of our regular contributors, has written about a U.S. jury that reached the verdict that Martin Luther King was killed as a result of a conspiracy involving several U.S. agencies, making this the cover-up of the century.

Edmonton's Raging Grannies have been writing and performing songs against the system for eight years. Here's two protest songs about Stockwell Day that you're sure to enjoy.

And finally, there's Christian Stuhr's article on politics, mental health and the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Or if you prefer something on the lighter side, you can always read "Say What?" Be prepared for choice quotes from Stockwell Day, the National Citizens' Coalition, Barbara Amiel, George "Dubya" Bush, and Patrick Buchanan.

Enjoy.
George Manz
editor

Dear Briarpatch,

I just received the September issue of *Briarpatch* today with the announcement of your new web page. After having had a delightful 15 minute tour around the site - easy to do with the layout, good clear fonts and colours - I thought I would just say what a good job your people have done!

**Dorothy Robinson-Priest
Lacombe, AB**

Dear Briarpatch,

Recently, there has been some discussion about referendums, on the left as well as on the right. This concerns me.

First of all, if Stockwell Day is advocating referendums, we must ask ourselves *why* does he want them? This is *not* an issue that the Canadian Alliance and the left can agree on.

Our education system leaves a lot out and is getting more reliant on cor-

porations all the time. We still hear that Columbus "discovered" America. How much time is given in school to discuss the merits of trade unions? Schools are focusing more and more on what corporations want in an employee, and less and less on the importance of critical thinking.

As long as we have corporations and the rich controlling our media, we can't possibly get both sides of an issue to the public. Those with the most money to promote their point of view will win.

Ask yourself:

- * How much do you think the civil rights movement would have benefitted from a referendum in the 1950s?
- * Would a referendum have speeded up equal rights for gays and lesbians?
- * How much honest information are people getting about issues concerning native people?

* What about a referendum asking people if they support tax cuts?

People need the whole story before they can make informed, democratic choices.

It's also important to remember that once a referendum is over and you've lost, what do you do then? Supposedly, democracy will have prevailed, which may be total nonsense.

Once you open the door and say a referendum can be good for one issue, how can you say it's not good for another issue? You've started down a slippery slope.

We must be careful that we understand the difference between what may initially *seem* to be democratic, and what actually *is* democratic. Be careful what you wish for.

**Heather Heighes
Waterloo, ON**

the colonel gets a union

by Garnet Dishaw

After 120 employees at six Regina KFC outlets signed union cards with the Hotel Employees, Restaurant Employees Union earlier this year, they still had to get a first collective agreement. So, after negotiations with the company failed, the workers - many in their teens - had to go out on strike in August. But after picket lines were up for just half a day, the company caved in and negotiated a decent first contract.

The Regina KFC agreement will substantially increase wages from a low of \$6 an hour to \$7.85 an hour. The new contract also has language which provides for improved job security.

The KFC workers had lots of help from the rest of the labour movement.

When noon hour informational pickets were set up around KFC outlets, at least a dozen other unions helped walk the picket lines.

Garnet Dishaw is the Research and Communications Director of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.



photo: George Manz

Dirty Laundry

The Clothesline Project helps break the silence to end violence against women.

It's called the Clothesline Project - T-shirts painted by women and children expressing their messages about violence and the need to end it.

The Project was part of the World March of Women activities on September 17 in Winnipeg, which included 1,000 women marching from The Forks to the Manitoba Legislature.

Women and children created over 500 T-shirts - far beyond the expectations of the organizers.

"We need to air our 'dirty laundry' and break the silence about the violence in women's lives," said Barbara Martin, who works at Klinik Community Health Centre. "The Clothesline Project is a way to help people face the brutal reality about violence against

women in our communities and start to heal the damage," the CUPE Local 2338 member added.

"The T-shirts, which came from all over Manitoba, were testaments to the feelings of the women and children who created them. It allows healing with dignity through artistic expression and community support," says Martin, spokesperson for the Project's planning committee.

More than 35,000 individuals around the world participated in Clothesline Projects to raise awareness about the impact violence has on women and their families and to promote action to end the violence.



**Poverty
has
many
faces.**

**This one
belongs
to a
retired
health
worker.**

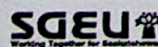


The average pension income for a retired health worker is less than \$500 a month.

That's because the SAHO pension plan, which covers about 25,000 health workers, has one of the poorest contribution rates in the country.

Most employers contribute between 5% - 9% of an employee's earnings to the pension plan. But health care employers contribute an average of only 4.6%. It's nothing to be proud of. Poor pensions mean poor people. The provincial government needs to provide improved pension funding to the Health Districts.

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THE DRUMS OF AFRICA BEAT FOR RACIAL TOLERANCE

by Martin Wooldridge

In the last week of July this year, the Saskatchewan Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) held a week of activist rallies as well as African-based drumming sessions.

A rally and information leafleting session at the city limits on the south end of Regina received brief, token media coverage by local TV stations and *The Leader-Post*.

For the following three days, activists and artists performed drumming sessions at the local CBC building. These events received favourable attention from passing motorists but the local daily media covered the events with silence.

SCAR's week of action culminated in a lunch-time drumming session on the steps of the provincial Legislative Building, with brief speeches by SCAR members citing personal racist experiences.

SCAR president Bob Hughes delivered open letters to the Ministers of Justice and Labour. Using statistics from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's latest annual report as well as Statistics Canada, the letters demonstrated the hugely disproportionate numbers of aboriginal and visible minority citizens encountering discrimination and imprisonment.

Daniel Kasongo, his wife and young children came to Regina in May 1998 after living in Montreal since 1984. Daniel Kasongo, originally from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), was successfully employed as a French teacher and French language journalist in Montreal but found the politics of separation contrary to his idea of a united Canada.

He was also drawn to Saskatchewan by his awareness of the social democratic history of the province, including the life story and example of Tommy Douglas.

While Kasongo was successful at sharing his cultural heritage through the introduction of African aerobics and dance, the formation of the African drum trio *Batimbo*, and weekly African drum and dance sessions at the YWCA, he found the doors to employment opportunities for which he was qualified firmly barred by the forces of institutional racism.

After Kasongo complained, SCAR president Bob Hughes says the week of activism was sparked by the racism which Kasongo encountered in the employment field.

Believing Kasongo's situation is not unique, multi-cultural community activist Christine Lwanga commented that "the main difference is that Daniel was not prepared to accept employment racialism and was determined to

stand up for his rights."

But Lwanga believes that in order for the provincial Human Rights Commission to be more effective, the government needs to show leadership by increased funding for additional staff resources.

Daniel Kasongo's experiences of institutional racism in the workplace resulted in complaints to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission about employment practices at the University of Regina Language Institute, complaints to the federal Human Rights Commission about Radio Canada and the Farm Credit Corporation, as well as a formal complaint to the Chief Superintendent of the RCMP Training Academy.

After the formal complaints and the demonstrations failed to rectify his employment prospects, Kasongo left Regina to return to his homeland, the Congo, to try to rebuild his life in a country that continues to be notoriously undemocratic and unstable. Kasongo admits that he will miss the many friends he made during the past two years, but claims the forces of institutional racism were just too great to fight any further.

Unless Canada and Saskatchewan stop merely paying lip service to the evils of covert racism using Human Rights Commission structures as mere window dressing and becomes serious about combating racism in all its forms, Canada's international reputation as the best place in the world to live will rapidly disappear.

If Saskatchewan cannot accommodate gifted, enthusiastic, community-focused citizens such as Daniel Kasongo, our future as a province with a reputation for social progress and enlightened governance will deservedly become a tarnished travesty and very much only part of our history and not our future.

Martin Wooldridge is an aging activist who has lived and travelled widely in the world.



photo: Veronica Kasongo

No Ticket to Prosperity

Mike Harris and the No Sense Revolution.

by Paul Bobier

Some years ago, I was employed by an entrepreneur who felt he could work me through the vacation period every Ontarian deserved by law. There was no union to support my concerns - only the Employment Standards Act of Ontario. Had it not been for this act, my old employer would have probably demanded employees work overtime and through vacations entirely on his own terms, and not in fairness to his employees.

Since the majority of workers aren't protected by unions in Ontario, they should be concerned because the Mike Harris government plans to water-down basic protections of the Employment Standards Act.

The Progressive Conservative Party is the one funded best by businesses in Ontario. Just as landlords funded the Tories the most and hoped for legislative goodies in return, businesses expect weakened labour legislation in return for their donations.

During the 1999 general election, the Tories revealed only a small portion of their labour reform intentions, perhaps so that working people would still be tempted to vote for them. Now that Premier Mike Harris and Labour Minister Chris Stockwell have finally shown what they really want to push through the Legislature, it looks like full-time unorganized labour is going to be exploited by a "business-government partnership."

The Ontario government's proposed legislation would eliminate the need for employers getting permits to work anyone beyond 48 hours per week. Instead, it would set a maximum of 60 hours per week, claiming the employee must consent to working beyond 48 hours.

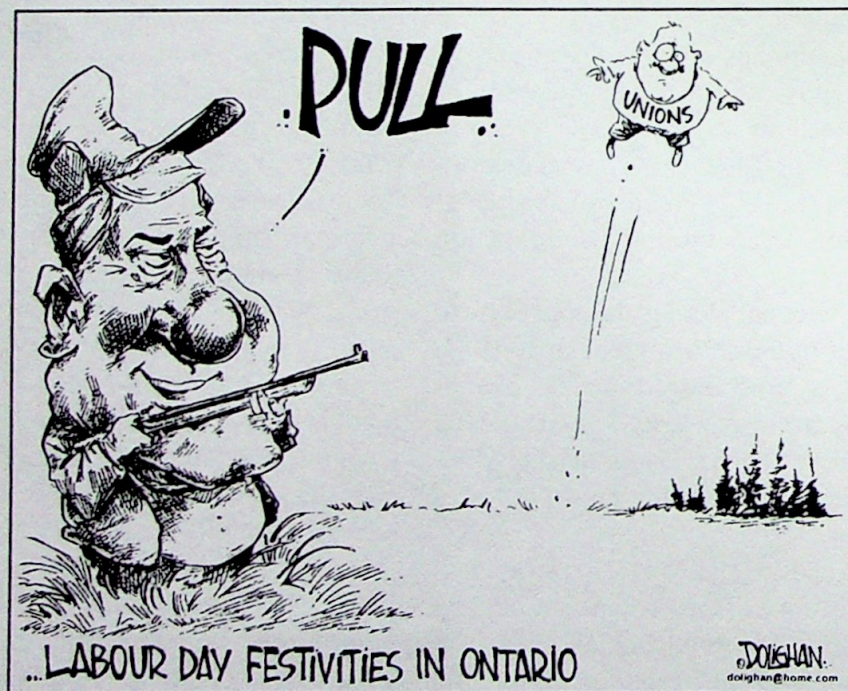
Of course, what's missing is any legislated protection for a worker who refuses to work beyond 48 hours. Pre-

sumably, company management can find a convenient way to demote or dismiss employees who try to devote time to their family, hobbies or volunteer work.

Meet the Robo-Workers, the dutiful employees who give their lives to an employer that runs them until they burn out, and lets them go when they're no longer productive.

Another anti-labour proposal is for employers to schedule vacations, not in weekly intervals, but in days instead. The government claims this would only be at the request of the employee, but the employer can make it clear at the interview stage that every good employee should

say in writing that they're willing to give their employer this flexibility. To get a job in the first place, applicants may be pressured to sign away those important family vacations which take much longer than one or two days. Such a policy could negatively affect hospitality, recreation and tourism businesses in Ontario, as more and more families and couples are forced to spend their vacations closer to home.



Bob Cruickshank, president of the Waterloo Regional Labour Congress disagrees with the government's proposal: "Your boss really has the power . . . he'll say you can either agree to take two of your vacation days now, or you know where to go."

In his book, *In Search of a New Left*, James Laxer asks if it makes sense for industrial workers to work overtime, when other workers can't get a decent job at all. He mentions a lack of moderation in working hours in Canada today, with overworked people fearing the loss of their jobs at one end, and overwrought, unemployed and semi-employed workers at the other end, who can't find full-

time employment.

The employers' main reason for demanding excessive overtime is that it saves them money - even after the overtime premiums are paid to wage earners. This is because every new employee costs the employer more money, especially if there are supplemental benefit and pension plans involved.

As Murray Dobbin points out in *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen*, employers tend not to pay their salaried employees extra money for overtime. Salaried employees (professional, management, and non-management) will be working more unpaid hours, if the Ontario government allows a 60-hour work week.

Beyond labour costs, however, there are definite benefits to restricting overtime. Buzz Hargrove, president of the Canadian Autoworkers Union, pushed for the end of overtime at Chrysler's Windsor plant in 1993, obliging management to hire more workers for a third shift instead. In his biography, *Labour of Love*, Hargrove noted the benefits of a third shift and no overtime: "Quality was up, productivity was up, absenteeism was down. And we created 1,000 new direct jobs. . . The [union] leaders had wanted an end to overtime, partly so we could create more jobs at the plant, but also to keep our members healthy and able to enjoy the families they worked to support."

Another employment standard the Harris government has sold out is the minimum wage in Ontario - kept at a paltry \$6.85 an hour since 1995. Translated into full-time earnings, minimum wage brings only \$14,248 a year, before deductions.

Hypocritically, Tory MPPs have recently pushed for a pay raise of \$25,000 (to bring their annual salary to \$103,458), but claim raising the minimum wage would harm the economy.


Actually, there is no real evidence to say raising the minimum wage negatively affects the economy, but the Tories want to please small business owners (and keep their support), by minimizing their labour costs.

Despite all the Ontario government's talk of globalization, labour flexibility and economic competitiveness, it can't convince most people that weakening employment standards or maintaining a low minimum wage is anyone's ticket to prosperity.

Don't let Queen's Park sell out the labour standards that remain to protect the people of Ontario. The Tories have no real facts to back their case, only a political ideology and special business interests to serve.

If you find yourself forced to work when you should be on vacation, remember that Tory MPPs will probably be at their cottages or on the golf course - with wealthy investors and business leaders as their guests.

Paul Bobier is a freelance writer in Kitchener, Ontario.



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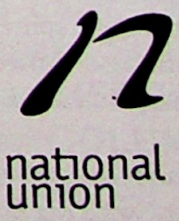

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Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth?

Bill Gates' emissaries brought millions of dollars worth of gifts to the people of the Arctic. Why Microsoft's mission failed.

by Derek Rasmussen

The spate of recent negative publicity and court losses suffered by Microsoft and its founder seems to have led to a splurge of cyber-altruism apparently aimed at quickly repairing the founder's reputation. Just about every state and province in the U.S. and Canada is benefitting from this sudden hemorrhage of "e" charity from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Except for Nunavut and the Yukon. These two territories are apparently the only dark spots on the map, untouched by Mr. Gates' largesse - at least so far.

This summer, the Gates Foundation chartered a plane and flew north to try to fix that. The plane landed in Nunavut, Canada's new territory, and disgorged its Foundation staffers. Their mission? - to try to give away a whole pile of money for a whole bunch of computer stuff... in 48 hours.

Nunavutians were not sufficiently awed. Canadian newspapers reported the Foundation staff's severe disappointment at the lacklustre response to their offer of millions of dollars of free computer equipment and software. Newspaper writers shook their heads in despair over the shortsightedness of us backcountry Arctic folks who could let such an apparently generous gift horse waltz right out of the barn.

One of the places where Microsoft's chartered plane touched down was Pond Inlet at the northern tip of Baffin Island. I happened to be in the Pond Inlet library with a few colleagues when "The Foundation" came a-calling. Coincidentally, we had gathered in the other wing of the same building to listen to Elisapee Ootoova, a vibrant Inuk elder, describe some of the traditional wisdom of Inuit culture. She also showed us the manuscript for the Inuktitut dictionary that she and other elders are in the midst of composing.

I have heard Inuit describe Elisapee Ootoova in English as a "walking encyclopedia." But if Bill Gates has already bundled an encyclopedia into his software, what do we need Elisapee Ootoova for?

During her talk in Inuktitut, Elisapee Ootoova never mentioned the Microsoft visitors, but through a translator she did describe how Nunavut elders feel as though they've "been put on a shelf," how they're only "trotted out on display" nowadays, how their knowledge doesn't seem to matter as much to young people any more.

Elisapee Ootoova's observations beg the question: Is it possible that our focus on knowledge as something that



Pond Inlet

is fixed on the screen and transferred by wire has undermined the knowledge that lives in people and is shared by conversation?

American professor Chet Bowers has documented a growing gulf between "high-status" and "low-status" knowledge in his forthcoming book *Let Them Eat Data*. Bowers says that we reserve the "high-status" category for knowledge that is print-based and "commodifiable;" whereas knowledge depending on face-to-face relationships, on the nuance, cadence and silence afforded by the spoken word and body language is deemed "low-status." Bowers warns that while Euro-Americans tend to emphasize "de-contextualized thinking," Inuit appear to rely more upon communication in person, "on mentoring, and spoken stories to pass on moral values and wisdom of how to live in ecological balance. These contextualized and face-to-face patterns cannot be communicated through a com-



Elisapee Ootoova

puter without transforming them into a degraded form of abstract information.”

Computer teacher Lowell Monke has echoed Bowers’ concerns. Monke teaches advanced computer technology in an Iowa public school. Iowa has been touted by *Newsweek* as the “cutting edge” of wired schooling in America. But the problem, according to Monke, is that the

wired world is being viewed as a superior learning environment to the “messy, complex” world of human relationships. He cites the example of the school’s “gifted and talented” students who all chose to research the topic of multiculturalism on the Internet rather than try to talk to any of the students of 12 different nationalities who were taking the ESL course in the next classroom.

“Gathering information on other cultures is easy,” says Monke, “coming to terms with other cultures is not.”

Monke has also tracked the growing monopolization of money and time by the never-ending cycle of technology upgrades (see *Yes!* magazine, Winter 1998/99). Monke says that in Iowa nearly half the professional development days - which used to focus on upgrading teaching skills and new ways of helping students learn - are now concerned with upgrading teachers’ computer skills. But as his principal says: “we’ve invested so much money in technology, we have to make it a priority.”

The people of Pond Inlet and Nunavut could hardly be deemed “technophobic.” The same week that Microsoft was in town, a federal commission in Whitehorse, hundreds of miles away, was hearing presentations via the videoconference equipment in the Pond Inlet telehealth centre. In that same week, HF radios were humming in dozens of Pond Inlet homes as hunters listened to fellow hunters from nearby Arctic Bay who were temporarily trapped on an ice-flow that had broken free and was drifting.

Pond Inlet families have fax machines, computers, and skidoos; as well as qamutiks (sleds), dog teams, and hunting equipment. Different technologies for different needs. But what’s the right tool for the job?

If Bill Gates’ chartered plane had had any mechanical problems and been forced to land outside town, would his

staff have wanted to be near a community of folks who could navigate the Internet, or those who could navigate the sea-ice?

Fortunately, perhaps, both skills thrive in the High Arctic, one tried and proven, the other recently developed and frequently unreliable. Every tool strengthens some tendencies and weakens others. Every tool involves choices.

But when Mr. Gates’ emissaries, his doctors from “computers sans frontiers,” drop in for a 48-hour visit, they come bearing money and contribution agreements - no time for choices and cautious deliberation, and certainly no time to spend listening to the wisdom of Elisapee Ootoova.

In any event, the Microsoft folks apparently left Pond Inlet feeling disappointed; they couldn’t understand how people in the Arctic could look a gift horse in the mouth; but maybe folks up here just wanted to be sure which end of the horse they were looking at.

Derek Rasmussen is a policy advisor to the Inuit land claim organization Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. He has lived in Iqaluit since 1991. He was visiting Pond Inlet June 12-15, the same week Microsoft came to town. The opinions expressed here are his alone and not those of NTI.



**Pacific
Fresh
Fish**

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DROP IN SOON!

From Wackenhut to Walkerton

Ontario's plans to privatize prisons.

by Charlie Angus

When 14-year-old Sarah Lowe was sentenced to a six-month stint in a Texas juvenile detention centre, her parents thought it might turn her life around. The rebellious teenager had become too difficult to deal with, and the institution, run by Wackenhut Corrections Corporation, promised intensive counselling, support and schooling. What Sarah Lowe received, however, was something much different.

According to CBS *Marketwatch*, Sarah Lowe was subjected to repeated rapes and threats from members of the almost all-male staff. One guard threatened to murder her if she told her family.

When the Lowe family found out what had been done to their daughter, they launched a lawsuit alleging widespread and systematic sexual abuse of the female prisoners at the institution. Eleven other girls came forward as plaintiffs.

This wasn't the first time that Wackenhut was making the headlines for problems at its institutions. With 30,000 prisoners and 33 institutions across the U.S., Wackenhut has emerged as one of the two big players in the new prisons-for-profit industry. But the company, along with other competitors, has been dogged by numerous allegations of abuse, graft and understaffing at various facilities.

In August 1999, a major prison riot at a Wackenhut facility in New Mexico took the life of rookie guard Ralph Garcia. His pay for having to deal with rival gang violence in the prison was a lowly \$7.98 an hour.

The riot resulted in a 500-page legislative report on the state of New Mexico's prisons. The report pointed the finger at Wackenhut for inadequate staffing, low pay and high turnover among its employees.

In Louisiana, the newly opened Jena Youth Facility, which was heralded as a "model correctional facility," became the focus of numerous investigations by the U.S. Justice Department.

In one year, the facility had five different wardens and the staff turned over three times. The U.S. Department of Justice found the youths were subjected to "cruel and



photos: OPSEU

unusual punishment" and concluded that Jena is a "dangerous place to be."

A Louisiana-based journalist who followed the Jena situation says the problems at Jena stemmed from the need to extract profit from the operation.

"You have some highly paid corporate officers and you have shareholders. And so you have to find places to cut costs. Staff were undertrained. They received minimum wage. The investigations by the Justice Department found the prisoners weren't fed properly. They were underclothed. It was like *Oliver Twist*."

After less than two years in operation, Wackenhut, in the face of a number of lawsuits, turned over administration of Jena to the State of Louisiana.

In Florida, five guards at a Wackenhut operation were fired for having sex with inmates. As well, allegations of sexual abuse against female inmates in three separate Texas facilities cost the company a \$12 billion contract. According to an article in the *American Statesman*, female inmates traded sex with guards for basic living amenities like shampoo and underwear. The starting wage for a guard in that facility? \$6.85 an hour.

The Lowe case eventually settled out of court on the caveat that the Lowe family never mention the facts of the case in court.

The day the decision was announced, Sarah Lowe killed herself. It took two shots from a gun - the first shot to the chin failed, so the wounded girl tried a second time with a shot to the temple.

Sarah's sister Jenny was quoted on CBS: "She didn't want any money. She just wanted an apology for ruining her life."

Welcome to Ontario

If Rob Sampson, Ontario's Minister of Corrections, has his way, Wackenhut and its main competitor, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), could be coming to a town near you. Both companies are likely bidders as Ontario moves to turn over its jails to private, for-profit corporations. Both companies are in the forefront of the storm of allegations about the failings of privatized prisons.

The Ministry has already privatized a boot camp for young offenders and is pushing ahead with plans to close smaller jails, and build a series of large superjails which will then be turned over to private operators.

On the slate for privatization is a boot camp for adults near North Bay, two youth facilities and two new superjails slated for Penetanguishene and Thunder Bay.

Ross Virgo of the Corrections Ministry said that tenders have not been put out on these contracts yet, but that the projects are going ahead.

Liberal MPP Dave Levac believes the privatization of jails is a major threat. "The reality is very simple. Prison privatization is a failed experiment. Why should Ontario be pushing ahead with privatization when U.S. states which have tried it are now passing laws against them?"

Levac believes that the issue about finances and cost cutting has diverted attention from the more fundamental moral issue.

"The government has been very crafty in trying to sell this in terms of efficiency and saving money. We need to talk about this as a moral issue. We don't sell blood. We don't sell organs. We shouldn't be selling bodies."

Crafty or not, the Ministry of Corrections has been backing up their privatization push with a hefty stick. And two communities in northern Ontario - Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay - have apparently been cowed by this stick.

Both communities were among the 80 municipalities across Ontario that passed resolutions against privatization of local jails. No problem, replied the Minister in letters to each of these upstart municipalities; step out of line and we will ensure that no more money from our Ministry is put into your community.

Put simply: shut up about privatization or we'll not only leave you out of the bidding for future facilities, we'll close your existing jails. In the face of this threat, both the

Sault and Thunder Bay backed down.

Levac is disgusted, "Shame on this government. Shame on the councils for not having the fortitude to stand up, for caving in. Why would a government resort to such bullying tactics unless it's to push ideology?"

The ideology in question, privatization, has been a hallmark of the Common Sense Revolution. But so far the Tories have been slow to make a success of it. Attempts to privatize the Liquor Control Board and TVOntario were put on the back burner because of low public support.

As well, privatizing hydro utilities has already led to charges of price gouging. But by far the biggest headache is coming from the public outcry over the deaths from the E. coli outbreak in Walkerton. Regardless of who the Tories look to blame, the issue continually keeps coming back to the privatization of water labs by the province.

Yet now, with these other efforts stalled or creating political turmoil, the government is pushing ahead with its prison agenda. Levac believes it has nothing to do with finances and everything to do with hot button politics.

"The first Bill this government brought in after coming back in 1999 had nothing to do with health, education or the environment. It was a law to outlaw squeegee kids. Think about it. There are only 200 squeegee kids in the province but they use the safety issue as a hot button issue. It's the same with going after prisons."

Municipal opposition

So far, prison privatization hasn't managed to hit the province's political radar screen. But in Penetanguishene, which is slated to be home to the province's first privatized superjail, the issue has created a storm of controversy.

Last November, the Ministry announced that the new 1,200-bed facility would be turned over to the private sector. Municipal leaders were outraged.

Wayne Redditt is a member of a local citizens' committee opposed to the privatization venture.

"The municipality entered into this deal because they thought they were going to be getting a lot of good paying OPSEU [Ontario Public Service Employees Union] jobs. People were told it was going to be a publicly run facility. Then after the election we are told that it will be private. People here didn't expect to be treated like guinea pigs."

Public meetings and rallies have fanned the flames against the venture. And so far Sampson's big stick threat doesn't seem to be working. With work already well advanced on the \$90 million facility, the province can't very well threaten to cut off funds.

Redditt says local people haven't been mollified by government promises.

"The Ministry came here to a public meeting. They told us the jail would be safe because it would have the best concrete, the best structural steel and the sharpest wire.

But that wasn't what we were concerned about at all. The information we have found on these institutions is appalling."

Redditt says a major concern for residents is whether or not proper staffing and pay in a private jail will match that in a public sector prison.

"The only room these companies have to make a profit for their shareholders is taking it out of wages. You have employees who are poorly paid and there are high turn-overs."

As well, Levac says that the promised 300 staff positions has been "taken off the table."

Ross Virgo, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Correctional Services, maintains that the province will be establishing a code of standards before allowing the private companies to assume control.

As well, says Virgo, "There will be ongoing monitoring at these facilities and the presence of Ministry personnel."

Redditt isn't impressed.

"The Ministry says they are going to learn from the mistakes made in the United States. Well hallelujah brother, the places we are talking about are California, which has a bigger population than Canada; Ohio, which has a higher population than Ontario. These people weren't hicks. They weren't stupid people. I just don't see how Ontario is going to be able to negotiate a better deal."

Appalling record

With no Canadian companies in the field, the most likely contenders are Wackenhut and CCA. Both companies have come under withering fire across the United States.

One of their most vocal critics is Brian Dawe, Director of Corrections USA, a clearinghouse centre on prison issues. Speaking from his office in Newton, New Hampshire, Dawe says the privatization boom in the United States has gone to bust.

"In the late 1980s prison privatization was growing very rapidly across the U.S. In the beginning there was no information network to let people know what was going on in other jurisdictions. You had people in North Carolina who didn't have a clue about the debacle at the prison in Youngstown, Ohio, or New Mexico or Colorado."

Dawe is an irrepressible source of statistics on abuse,

escape rates, assaults and employee turnover in the private versus public prison systems. Overall, he says, the fundamental issue comes down to the focus of the company.

"If anybody in Ontario thinks there's going to be a board meeting at CCA headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee or at Wackenhut head office in West Palm Beach, Florida and the topic of conversation is 'how do we keep the good folks of Ontario safe,' you're out of your mind. The only thing that will be mentioned is 'why aren't we making enough money there. How do we cut corners?' Because the only thing the shareholders care about is making money and that's how this whole thing plays out."

Dawe says that privatization of prison guards is only

part of the problem faced in the prison-for-profit movement. He points to attempts to privatize kitchen and other support staff. He says that at one jail in Massachusetts, on the very first day of a newly privatized kitchen operation, guards recognized a convicted felon working behind the counter.

"The privateers hired this guy right out of jail. You don't think he's going to be bringing in contraband to the jail? Are you kidding me? You don't hire a \$6 an hour burger flipper and expect to get security. You just don't."

Dawe says he would be surprised if Wackenhut or CCA even survives in the prison business over the next ten years. He says liability issues and lawsuits have been seriously eroding the corporate bottom line.

As Ontario moves ahead with its plans, North Carolina became the latest in a number of states to take back control of prison populations from the private sector.

Is Ontario running to catch a train that won't leave the station?

No, says Brian Dawe, "Ontario is running to catch a train that going to crash into a wall."

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TAX TRUTH #3

**I doubt
that when average Canadians
suggest the tax system
should be simplified,**

**they mean taxes should be repealed
on forms of income
received primarily
by high-income Canadians.**

**Neil Brooks
Professor of tax law,
Osgoode Hall, Toronto**



Created by the National Union of Public and General Employees-www.nupge.ca-for other tax truths.

HEAD-ON COLLISION

Believe it or not, the WTO has ruled that the Japanese have to learn to drive on the other side of the road.

by Jim Stanford

A dispute-settlement panel of the World Trade Organization handed down a sweeping judgement in August that Japan's traffic laws constitute a barrier to trade and must be changed.

The judgement is considered a major victory for North American and European auto producers, who argued before the WTO that Japan's requirement that vehicles drive on the left side of the road established an unfair barrier to imports of cars and trucks.

As one auto industry lobbyist explained, "The Japanese government literally forces its citizens to drive on the wrong side of the road. It's a major reason why they don't buy our left-hand-drive vehicles."

The WTO panel is similar to those that forced Canada to abolish the Auto Pact, its pharmaceutical patent laws, its domestic magazine policy, an aerospace technology program, and several agricultural marketing boards.

The Japanese government must now enter into negotiations with other countries to determine a timetable for reforming its traffic laws. A WTO official, who wished to remain both nameless and faceless, stressed that Japan would be given a "reasonable period of time" to phase in right-side-of-the-road traffic rules.

"We're not heartless," said the official. "We're not going to force them to make this change overnight." A transition period of up to 18 months will be permitted, during which Japanese drivers will gradually begin to drive on the right.

Sales of imported vehicles in Japan are expected to enjoy an immediate boost as a result of the WTO decision. Large North American sport utility vehicles, such as the

Dodge Durango and the Lincoln Navigator, will likely experience the greatest increases in market penetration thanks to their enhanced ability to withstand head-on collisions. The tank-like General Motors Hummer is expected to be particularly popular during the transition period.

Canada's Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew immediately hailed the WTO's decision as "a victory for free trade." When asked about the expense of forcing an entire country to drive on the opposite side of the road, Pettigrew pointed to the long-run efficiency gains that theoretically should result from free trade.

"Sure, there will be short-run adjustment costs," Pettigrew admitted, referring to the temporary incidence of head-on crashes and other problems. "But in the long-run, the Japanese will thank us for this. They can now stop driving on the wrong side of the road, and start to focus their skills and resources in those industries where they are more efficient."

Emboldened by the WTO decision, foreign automakers plan to launch other complaints about Japanese trade practices. Sources within the industry hint that the next WTO challenge may target the unfair use of the Japanese language.

"Japanese customers can hardly make sense of North American owner's manuals," complained one Detroit-based auto analyst. "They're much less likely to buy a vehicle when they can't figure out how to make it work."

It is widely expected that Japan will resist WTO demands to abolish the Japanese language by claiming a cultural exemption to normal trade rules. But the WTO official scoffed at that prospect. "There's even less genuine

Basically, it won't stop
until foreigners finally
start to think like
Americans, act like
Americans, and - most
of all - shop like
Americans.

cultural value to a Japanese-language owner's manual than there is in the Canadian edition of *Reader's Digest*," he said.

Meanwhile, officials in China's trade ministry expressed pleasure with the WTO decision, suggesting that it enhances the likelihood that China will be admitted to the world trading club within the next year or two.

"Sure, our country is still nominally run by Communists," said the official. "But we drive on the right side of the road. This clearly indicates our readiness to accept the discipline of world market forces."

The implications of the WTO ruling on traffic laws may even extend to completely separate industries. An association representing U.S. beef growers, for example, is already discussing plans to launch a trade challenge against the Japanese sushi industry, based on the precedent created by the traffic law case.

"Japanese consumers are indoctrinated to eat raw fish from the time they are toddlers. No wonder they won't buy our meat," complained one beef lobbyist. "That's completely unacceptable."

The beef challenge may be backed by powerful support from the pharmaceutical industry, which has long complained of a lack of demand in Japan for U.S.-made cholesterol-reducing drugs.

This latest decision represents another expansion in the scope and breadth of the WTO's dispute-settlement

"There's even less genuine cultural value to a Japanese-language owner's manual than there is in the Canadian edition of Reader's Digest," the WTO official said.

system. What was initially intended as a means of arbitrating relatively narrow and arcane questions of trade law, has evolved into an authority with the mandate to challenge any law, policy, or practice found to inhibit the preeminent goal of expanded world trade.

The world-wide economic and cultural harmonization thus being encouraged by the dispute-settlement mechanism is a normal side-effect of globalization, explained a top U.S. trade official assigned to the

WTO. "Basically, it won't stop until foreigners finally start to think like Americans, act like Americans, and - most of all - shop like Americans."

When not reporting on WTO decisions from Geneva, Jim Stanford is an economist with the Canadian Auto Workers.



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Lest We Forget

The Role of Multinational Corporations During World War II

by Sally Johnson

Introduction

On this Remembrance Day holiday, people will be asked to remember the sacrifice of men and women who gave their lives in times of war. What is often forgotten are the business interests involved in these conflicts.

War is good business. World Wars are big business. *Briarpatch* decided to examine five major U.S. corporations and their German subsidiaries and their involvement in re-arming Nazi Germany, their role in supplying the Nazis with weapons and materials during the war, and the penalties (if any) they suffered as a result of their collaboration.

To make this information more accessible, it has been laid out in a table/endnote format.

Between World Wars these parent corporations...					
Corporation Name	Cultivated good relations with Nazi officials	Set up Nazi German subsidiaries	Hired pro-Nazi managers	Assisted Nazi arms build-up	Were awarded Nazi medals of honour
Coca-Cola	✓ 1	✓ 2	✓ 3		
Ford	✓ 4	✓ 5	✓ 6	✓ 7	✓ 8
General Motors	✓	✓ 9	✓	✓ 10	✓ 11
IT&T	✓	✓ 12	✓	✓ 13	
Standard Oil	✓	✓	✓		

1. German and U.S. Coke officials cultivated good relations with the Nazi government, culminating with Coke's prominence at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Nazi officials such as Reichsmarshall Hermann Göring and even Adolf Hitler reputedly enjoyed Coca-Cola.

2. Coke retained almost complete ownership of its German franchise.

3. Coke's top German manager, Max Keith, was a Nazi opportunist and sympathizer. In 1939 Keith ordered his workers to give a mass Sieg-Heil for Hitler's 50th birthday "to commemorate our deepest admiration and gratitude for our Führer who has led our nation into a brilliant higher sphere."

4. As early as 1922, the New York Times reported rumours that Ford was financing Hitler's nationalist and anti-Semitic movement in Munich. Apparently Hitler openly boasted of Henry Ford's support and praised Ford as a great individualist and a great anti-Semite. A photograph of Henry Ford hung in Hitler's quarters.

5. Ford had plants in Berlin and Cologne.

6. Ford's German managers reflected the Nazi ideologies of the times. For instance, Ford manager Edmund Heine replaced the normal meritocratic criterion for hiring staff with a racial criterion. Other German managers suggested that Ford would win favour with the Nazis "by assisting in the expulsion of Jews from the German economy."

7. By 1939 Ford AG had constructed a new plant especially designed to manufacture military vehicles, and began production of the SPKW, an army vehicle designed for use in rough terrain.

8. In 1938 Hitler awarded Henry Ford the Grand Cross of the German Iron Eagle in celebration of Ford's 75th birthday. Ford, ignoring American and British criticism, visited Berlin to accept the award.

9. In 1929 General Motors purchased 76 percent of the German auto giant Adam-Opel for \$29 million. At the time, Opel accounted for half of the output of the German auto industry.

10. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Opel was a willing and active supplier to the German Army.

11. In 1938, James D. Mooney, president of General Motors Overseas Corporation, received the Order of the Golden Eagle from Hitler. The medal, embossed with four swastikas, had a citation which said it was awarded to distinguished foreigners who had served the Reich well.

12. By the beginning of World War II, IT&T had invested \$30 million in Nazi Germany.

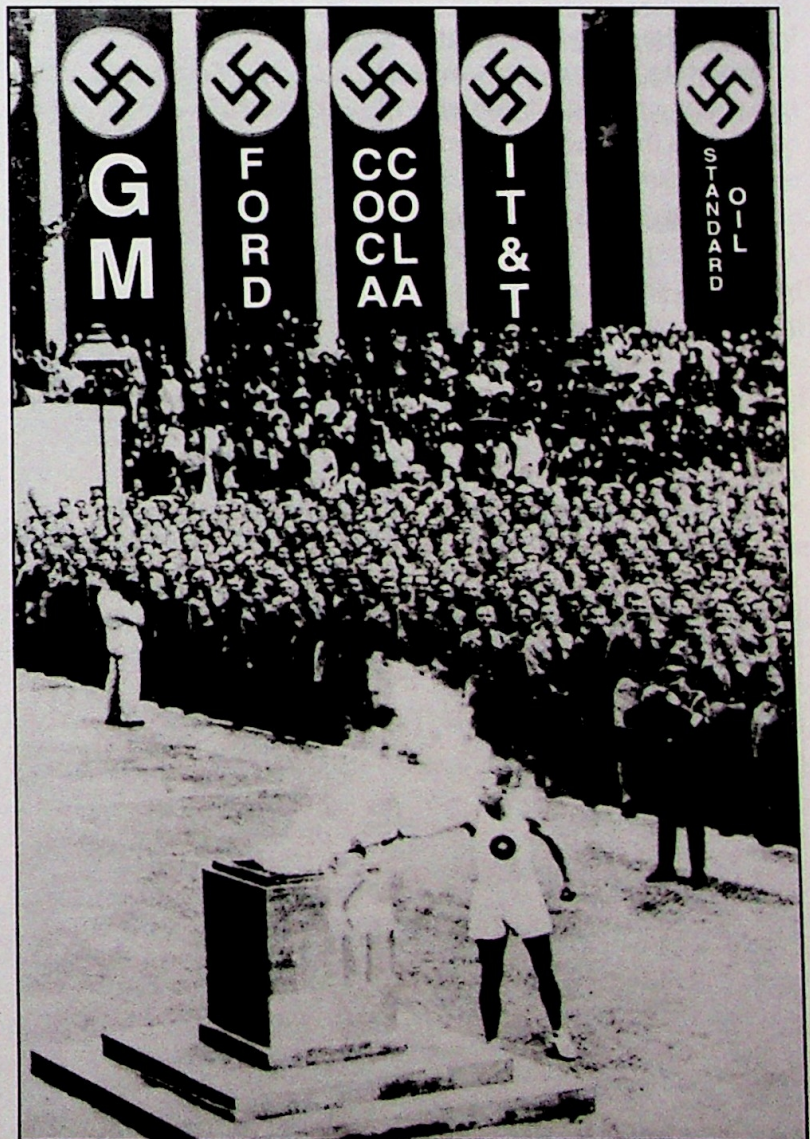
13. In 1938, IT&T obtained a 28 percent share of the military aircraft company Focke-Wulf.

During World War II these German subsidiaries...

Corporation Name	Management collaborated with the Nazis	Produced weapons and weapon systems for the Nazis	Used slave labour and concentration camp inmates	Supplied Nazi Germany with strategic materials	Violated the Geneva Convention
Coca-Cola	✓ 1		✓ 2		
Ford	✓	✓ 3	✓ 4		✓ 5
General Motors	✓	✓ 6	✓ 7		
IT&T	✓	✓ 8		✓ 9	
Standard Oil	✓			✓ 10	

1. Coke's Max Keith was appointed to the Nazi's Office of Enemy Property to oversee bottling plants in Nazi-occupied territories.
2. Coke used slave labour at its Essen plant to produce Fanta.
3. Ford produced military vehicles and aircraft for the Nazis at its Cologne and Berlin plants, and later at plants in Nazi-occupied France and Algiers.
4. Ford used slave labour in its plants. The Buchenwald concentration camp provided inmates to work at Ford's Cologne plant, while the Ravensbruck concentration camp supplied inmates at Ford's Berlin plant.
5. Ford used French and Russian prisoners of war to work in its Cologne plant, violating Article 13 of the Geneva Convention.
6. General Motors' Adam-Opel establishment in Russelheim manufactured military aircraft for Germany throughout the war. It manufactured 50 percent of all the propulsion systems for the Junker Ju 88, the deadliest bomber in the Nazi Air Force. On the ground, General Motors and Ford subsidiaries produced 90 percent of the three-ton Mule half-tracks and 70 percent of all the medium tonnage heavy trucks supplied to the armies of the Reich. The English secret services regarded these vehicles as the back-bone of Germany's army transport system.
7. The Buchenwald concentration camp supplied labour to General Motors' Adam-Opel at Russelheim. The Ravensbruck concentration camp provided prisoners for Adam-Opel at Brandenburg.
8. The head of IT&T, Sosthenes Behn, flew from New York to Madrid to Berne during the war to help improve Hitler's communications systems and improve the robot bombs that devastated London. IT&T built Focke-Wulfs that dropped bombs on British and American troops.
9. After Pearl Harbor, the German army, navy and air force contracted with IT&T for the manufacture of switchboards, telephones, alarm gongs, buoys, air raid warning devices, radar equipment and 30,000 fuses per month for artillery shells used to kill British, Canadian and American troops.
10. While millions of American and British civilian and military personnel struggled with oil and gasoline shortages, rationing and long gas station line-ups, Standard Oil of New Jersey managers shipped the enemy's fuel through neutral Switzerland. At one point, more fuel was shipped to fascist Spain and on to Nazi Germany, than was going to U.S. domestic customers. Shortly after the war, a U.S. judge, ruling in a patent dispute, stated that "Standard Oil can be considered an enemy national in view of its relationship with [the Nazi German corporation] I.G. Farben after the United States and Germany had become active enemies."

Lighting the Olympic flame at the 1936 Berlin Games.



After World War II parent corporations...

Corporation Name	Rehired Nazi collaborators	Lobbied U.S. government for compensation for damaged Nazi subsidiaries	Received compensation from U.S. government for damaged Nazi subsidiaries	Had Nazi managers convicted of war crimes or crimes against humanity
Coca-Cola	✓1			
Ford	✓2	✓	✓3	
General Motors		✓	✓4	
IT&T		✓	✓5	
Standard Oil				

1. Max Keith continued working for Coke after the war, becoming Europe's soft drink "super-führer."
2. By 1952 Ford had reassembled most of its Third Reich management team.
3. Ford lobbied the U.S. government for compensation as a result of damages to its Nazi plants caused by Allied bombing raids. The issue of Ford's war damages remained unsettled for over two decades. While the company claimed \$7 million in damages, the American government eventually awarded \$1.7 million minus payments received from the Nazis, yielding a net of \$522,525.
4. Along with their huge war profits, GM also wanted public money to compensate it for damage done to its Nazi plants by U.S. bombers. Finally in 1967, the U.S. government awarded General Motors \$33 million in the form of a tax exemption on profits for the "troubles and destruction occasioned to its aeroplane and motorized vehicle factories in Germany, Austria, Poland and China."
5. IT&T's Sosthenes Behn received millions of dollars in compensation for war damages to his German plants in 1944. Behn's Nazi partner Gerhardt Westrick had already received equivalent amounts of compensation from the Nazi government.

Sally Johnson is a B.C. activist and researcher.

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Remembering Brian Rohatyn

by Michelle Kowalski

"At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say, I believe that revolutionaries are guided by great feelings of love."

- Che Guevara

Brian Rohatyn passed away in his sleep on September 20, 2000 at the age of 33. He will long be remembered for his activism and solidarity with Cuba.

On January 31, 1996, Brian was part of the team of caravaners determined to take 325 computers to Cuba that were donated by people from all across North America. The computers had been collected for the InfoMed online medical network being set up throughout rural areas of Cuba by the World Health Organization.

Instead, the computers were seized at the San Diego-Mexican border by U.S. Customs, initiating one of the most pivotal moments in the modern international solidarity movement.

After three weeks of futile efforts to persuade the U.S. Treasury Department to release the computers, Pastors for Peace organizers, who were instrumental in annual humanitarian aid caravans to Cuba, announced a hunger strike. Twenty-eight-year-old Brian Rohatyn was the lone Canadian among five people who put their bodies on the front lines of a battle that lasted for over three months.

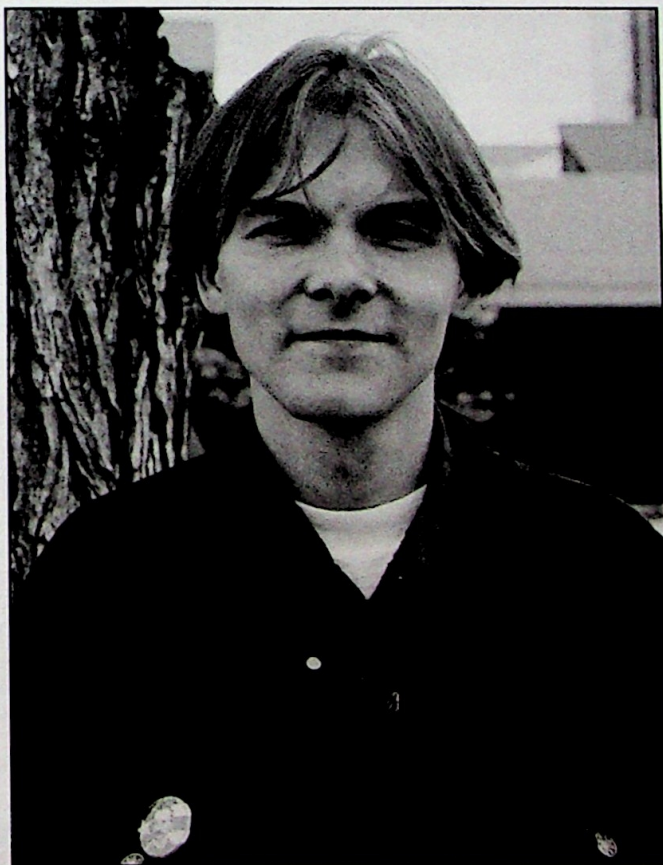
Brian's decision to join the fast wasn't easy. "My hand did not go up right away to volunteer for the fast, and I

began to think about everything, about going back to Vancouver with the others who were fleeing, about my feelings of frustration with regard to the seizure of these bonded

computers, and a million other things that we are unable to change everyday as more and more of our rights and freedoms are stripped from us and we do nothing about it. I could not accept all this and go on; something clicked and the whole idea of a fast began to make more and more sense. Before any of the logistical details had been confirmed, at the very same meeting that the fast was suggested, my hand went up, and I honestly haven't had a second thought about my commitment since then."

Lisa Valanti, one of the five fasters, said Brian's decision wasn't trivial. "Many thought him 'crazy' for coming into a foreign country and entering into a struggle that could have claimed his life, then and there, all for a bunch of old computers. He was Canadian. It wasn't his fight; his

government had a civilized relationship with Cuba. But Brian told the story of how he'd gone into his grandfather's basement and retrieved that old computer to donate to Cuba, and how he wanted *that* particular computer to be donated to Cuba. It wasn't trivial to him, or acceptable, that the government of the greatest empire on Earth would



Brian Rohatyn
photo: George Manz

expend its endless resources in causing misery, creating suffering for the Cuban people. He saw the future implications of allowing the U.S. government to violate international treaties and act as a rogue state. He understood he had an obligation not to allow the Canadian government to personalize the 'incident' or sweep it under the rug. He rallied Canada and inspired other countries to become more engaged."

Irene MacInnes, a caravanner from Vancouver said Brian "inspired a nation. Eventually, when they saw Brian's resolve, even the Canadian government stepped in to ask the U.S. for our aid to be released."

Brian understood solidarity. When the U.S. government announced that the Canadian computers were going to be allowed to cross the border but the American computers were not, Brian could have taken the easy way out and stopped his hunger strike. But that's not how Brian was.

As Lisa Valanti said, Brian "understood that solidarity knows no borders; until every computer was free to go, no victory could be claimed. All for one, and his one, wholeheartedly, for all."

Valanti is convinced that Brian's determination to go on with his hunger strike was what finally forced the U.S. government to release all the computers.

After the successful conclusion of the Fast for Life, Cuban emissaries to Canada presented Brian Rohatyn with an award from Fidel Castro in honour of his extraordinary contribution to the Cuban people. Brian was very embarrassed by this gesture and uncomfortable with the concept of himself as a hero.

Mona Acker, a member of the Regina Friends of Cuba, will always remember Brian's modesty, because he didn't seek attention to himself.

But Brian's and the other fasters' efforts did not end in 1996. "Because of the tenacity of the hunger strikers, the U.S. government didn't want to overtly try to stop subsequent caravans," said Irene MacInnes. "They were afraid of the bad publicity which they had received for the duration of the three months the hunger strikers had maintained their protest. It was a memorable moment as we crossed the U.S. border the next year into Mexico. The U.S. Customs officers stood back and watched us go by, unimpeded. Brian, with a cheeky grin on his face, couldn't resist calling out the window to them: 'So you couldn't uphold your own embargo, eh?'"

Brian was a true internationalist. "He came to the U.S.

as selflessly as Europeans came to ride the buses at the beginning of the civil rights movement," said Lisa Valanti. "He came, like those Americans who went to Spain to fight against fascism with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. He came like Che to Cuba - carrying on an internationalist tradition."

Sharmeen Khan, a close personal friend who met Brian during his hunger strike, said Brian "was genuinely outraged by injustice in the world. Yet he responded with great humour, kindness and dedication. He encouraged me to go to Cuba to attend the 14th International Festival of Youth and Students. He did all he could to give me contacts, ideas and support. He wanted as many people as possible to experience Cuba."

Brian really cared about people. "He loved people and worked for a society where we take care of each other," Sharmeen Khan continued. "He lived that dream with every action he did. His chosen employment as a residential care worker and a special

"Brian said, after the fast, now that he knew what he would have died for, it was clarified for him beyond any doubt what he was living for."

- Lisa Valanti

education assistant in schools showed how much he cared about people. That act of activism - love and compassion - has impacted so many organizations Brian worked for. It continues to impact me as I try to build the kind of community Brian dreamed of."

Brian's sudden death has left many people all over the world in shock. But his memory can also give us strength. "The spirit of Brian Rohatyn lives on in Canada, in the United States, and in Cuba - a country he came to love deeply," said Rev. Lucius Walker, the Executive Director of IFCO-Pastors for Peace. "The next Friendship caravan, arriving in Cuba this November in time for the Second World Solidarity Conference in Havana, will be dedicated to the life, the love, the incredible solidarity of Brian."

Messages, cards etc. may be sent to Brian's mother, Robin Rohatyn, #201-1638 East 3rd Avenue, Vancouver BC V5N 1G9 and to Brian's father, Brian Rands, 3630 Argyle Road, Regina, SK S4S 2C1.

Michelle Kowalski is a former editor of Prairie Dog Magazine, who now lives in the belly of the beast. She regrets that space limitations didn't allow her to include more of the tremendous feedback she received from Brian Rohatyn's many friends.

Viva Cuba

by George Manz

Briarpatch, along with many other groups in Saskatoon and Regina, is co-sponsoring the first trip to Saskatchewan by Carlos Fernández de Cossío, the Cuban Ambassador to Canada.

Born in Havana in 1959, Ambassador Fernández graduated in International Relations at Raúl Roa García Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana in 1983.

Prior to his appointment as Cuban Ambassador to Canada in 1999, he served as director of the North America Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before that he was a member of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations, and an official in the Department for International Organizations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While in Saskatoon, there will be a community welcome and dialogue with Ambassador Fernández at St. James Church in the Dr. Florence Haslam Hall, 607 Dufferin Ave. on Monday November 13 at 7:30 pm. While in the Bridge City, Fernández will visit the University of Saskatchewan, meet city dignitaries, tour an organic farm, and be shown several community development initiatives. For more information contact the Community Outreach and Education Centre at 933-4346.

After the Ambassador arrives in Regina on Tuesday November 14, he will speak on Cuban foreign policy at the University of Regina in the afternoon. For more information, please phone Mona Acker at 585-4520 or Miguel Sanchez at 585-4848.

Later that evening, the Cuban Ambassador will speak about the Cuban trade union movement to interested trade unionists from the Regina area. Tuesday night's event will



be held at SGEU Hall, 1440 Broadway Avenue at 7:30 pm.

Wednesday night will feature a public meeting with the Ambassador. There will be plenty of time for questions from the audience. This event will also be held at SGEU Hall, 1440 Broadway at 7:30 pm.

And finally, there will be a Latin Night dance party on Thursday November 16. The event, which is free to all, will be held at The Exchange, 2431-8th Avenue. Expect to dance to Latin music provided by local performers. Or you might even try a Cuban beverage made of sugar-cane.

While in Regina, we will be passing the hat at these events to help raise money for a health clinic in Cuba. Here's your chance to make a donation that will help provide necessary medical assistance to the people of Cuba. We hope you will be generous with your donations.

Briarpatch would like to thank the many organizations in the province that are assisting in organizing the Ambassador's trip. Without the hard work and financial assistance of groups such as the Community Outreach and Education Centre, the Regina Friends of Cuba, many trade unions in the province, and faculty and students at the University of Regina, this visit would not have been possible.

WHO KILLED MARTIN LUTHER KING?

The cover-up of the century.

by Asad Ismi

"The United States government is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

On December 8, 1999, a jury in Memphis, Tennessee reached the verdict that Martin Luther King Jr. was killed as a result of a conspiracy involving the FBI, CIA, U.S. Army, Memphis police and the Mafia.

After a five-week trial which presented 70 witnesses, the jury (made up of six blacks and six whites) rejected the official position that the civil rights titan was shot by a lone assassin, James Earl Ray, who was sentenced to 99 years in prison for the crime and died in 1998.

The verdict concluded a wrongful death civil lawsuit brought by the King family against Loyd Jowers, owner of Jim's Grill, a Memphis cafe located next to the scene of the shooting when it took place on April 4, 1968. The jury found Jowers guilty as one part of a large conspiracy created by government agencies. Jowers admitted his role but insisted that he did not know the identity of the target.

Coretta Scott King, Martin's widow, hailed the verdict as "a great victory for justice and truth." She added: "There is abundant evidence of a major high level conspiracy in the assassination of my husband and the civil court's unanimous verdict has validated our belief."

Dexter King, one of Martin's four children, said that his father was killed "because he challenged the establishment." He called the official investigation into Martin's murder "the most incredible cover-up of the century."

The Conspiracy

The case for conspiracy and the inadequacy of the lone assassin theory seem obvious. The state had no significant evidence implicating Ray. According to the official version, Ray shot King from the bathroom of a rooming house located next to the Lorraine Motel where the civil rights leader was staying. King was on the motel's second floor balcony at 6:01 pm on April 4, 1968 when a bullet struck his chin, knocking him to the ground. He died

in hospital an hour later.

The authorities never matched the bullet that killed King to the rifle they claim Ray used. Charles Stephens, the state's only eye witness, who claimed to have seen Ray leaving the rooming house soon after the shot, was too drunk to even stand up at the time.

There was a tree branch between the bathroom window and the balcony that made a clear shot impossible. Ray was not a trained marksman and the scope on the rifle was not sighted, which means that it could not have hit any target.

Six witnesses claimed that the shot came from bushes behind the rooming house. Jim's Grill was located under the rooming house and its back door opened on to the bushes.

Ray was jailed, not due to evidence, but because he pleaded guilty. He recanted three days later and spent the rest of his life trying to get a trial. Under Tennessee law, Ray had the right to a trial but this was consistently denied. Ray claimed that his guilty plea was coerced by Percy Foreman, his lawyer, who threatened Ray with the death penalty.

Ray was a petty criminal who had bungled almost every robbery he committed. In the King murder, he claimed to have been set up as a patsy by a man named Raul (of Portuguese origin) who, Ray said, directed his movements after Ray escaped from prison in April 1967.

Ray first met Raul in Montreal in August 1967 and agreed to work for him after he was promised travel papers. Raul was a gunrunner with links to Carlos Marcello, the Mafia boss of New Orleans. Ray smuggled contraband for Raul and went to several U.S. cities to make deliveries.

On April 3, 1968, Raul met Ray in Memphis. Raul had already asked Ray to buy a Remington 30.06 rifle with a telescopic sight. Ray was then told to get accommodation at the rooming house next to the Lorraine Motel and leave the rifle there.

On the afternoon of April 4, Raul asked Ray to "go to the movies" for three hours. After 6:01 pm, Ray heard on his car radio that King had been shot and the police were

looking for a white man in a white Mustang (the make of his car).

Ray escaped to Toronto and then flew to London, England where he was caught. Sidney Carthew, a seaman, testified at the Jowers trial that he met Ray and Raul together in Montreal's Neptune Bar in the summer of 1967.

Jowers also identified Raul. According to him, King's assassination was planned by three Memphis Police Department (MPD) officers in Jim's Grill over two days. The officers were Earl Clark, Johnny Barger and Marrell McCollough.

Jowers was asked to help in the plot by Frank Liberto, a produce dealer with Mafia connections, to whom he owed money. Liberto told Jowers that there would be a patsy and that the police would not be around. He had \$100,000 delivered to Jowers and asked him to hold it. Immediately after the shot was fired at King on April 4, Jowers was handed a smoking rifle at the back door of Jim's Grill by Earl Clark, the MPD's best marksman. Jowers believes Clark killed King.

Raul picked up the rifle and the money the next day, according to Jowers.

William Pepper, the King family's lawyer, actually found Raul living in Yonkers, New York. Raul was asked to appear in court but refused. Barbara Reis, journalist for *Publico*, the main newspaper in Portugal, testified that a source connected to Raul's family told her that agents of the U.S. government had visited them three times. The source added that the government was "protecting" the family and monitoring their phone.

For the jurors, one of the main indicators of conspiracy was the removal of all security for King in Memphis during April 3 - 4. A detail made up of black police officers assigned to King on previous visits to Memphis was not deployed this time. Similarly, two black firemen were removed from the fire station overlooking the Lorraine Motel on April 3, as was black detective Ed Redditt, who was surveilling King from there. Police emergency tactical units were also pulled back from around the motel, giving the assassin lots of room to escape. All police personnel disappeared from the motel an hour before the murder.

After the shooting, no All Points Bulletin describing the suspect was issued, nor was a "Signal Y," which would block off exits from the city. Both of these are standard police procedures.

A door-to-door investigation in the Lorraine Motel neighbourhood was never carried out by authorities and many witnesses were not questioned. The police ordered the bush area cut down on April 5, which eradicated the crime scene.

The state also claimed that Ray was driven by racism to kill King but there is no record of Ray displaying racist or violent behaviour. He had no motive to kill King.

However, there is lots of evidence to indicate that U.S. federal government agencies were out to get King. He was

extensively surveilled by the FBI, CIA and Army Intelligence as a dangerous radical who threatened national security. All three agencies believed that King had communist ties.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover hated King intensely and wanted him "neutralized" by almost any means. When



Martin Luther King Jr. with his wife and family in 1963.

King won the Nobel Peace Prize, Hoover publicly called him "the most notorious liar in the country."

A Senate report stated in 1976 that the FBI tried "to destroy Dr. Martin Luther King."

FBI assistant director William Sullivan considered King "the most dangerous and effective negro leader in the country."

King's phones were tapped, his movements watched, his rooms bugged and his entourage infiltrated. The FBI threatened him, blackmailed him, launched a media disinformation campaign to discredit him, and sent him a letter suggesting that he commit suicide.

The FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) was aimed at eliminating "black nationalist" groups and preventing the rise of a black "messiah." FBI memos also discussed finding a black leader to replace King.

In the final obscenity of U.S. "justice," the FBI, which clearly wanted King dead, was given the task of investigating his murder. Hence the official devotion to the lone assassin theory for the last 32 years.

Judge Joe Brown, who presided over one of Ray's appeals, called the FBI's investigation into King's killing, "inept and incapable if not downright incompetent."

Vietnam

In its surveillance of King, the FBI collaborated with U.S. Army Intelligence, which had been spying on the King family. There were seven U.S. Army Military Intelligence Groups (MIGs) spread out over the U.S., and six of them surveilled King as he toured the country. The Army main-



The motel in Memphis where Martin Luther King Jr. was killed in 1968, a month after his assassination during the Poor People's Campaign Rally.

tained a massive domestic spy system which included 304 intelligence offices in the U.S. and national security dossiers on seven million Americans.

In a series of articles in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* in March 1993, reporter Steve Tompkins detailed the "increasing hysteria" of Army Intelligence chiefs over the national security threat they thought King posed. Tompkins stated that Army Intelligence was "desperately searching for a way to stop [King]...."

On April 4, 1967, King announced his opposition to the Vietnam War which he called an "imperialist assault on Third World peasants." He equated the use of new weap-

ons against the Vietnamese to the testing of "new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe" by the Nazis.

King's condemnation of the Vietnam War made him the leader who could merge the anti-war and civil rights movements.

In December 1967, King announced his intention to lead a Poor Peoples' March to Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1968 and shut down the government if it didn't stop the war in Vietnam and take steps to end poverty in the U.S.

The Army received reports stating that "King will create massive civil disobedience in [Washington] and in ten to fifteen major cities in the U.S. in the spring of 1968."

The Army was not prepared for such upheaval. According to Major-General William Yarborough, Assistant Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence, there were "too few reliable troops to fight in Vietnam and hold the line at home."

Army surveillance of King continued until his assassination. Carthel Weeden, a former captain with the Memphis Fire Department, testified that on the afternoon of April 4, 1968, two men approached him at the fire station across from the Lorraine Motel, and showed the identification of U.S. Army officers. The men carried photographic equipment and positioned themselves on the rooftop of the fire station which gave them a clear view of King and the assassin. Any photographs could be in Pentagon archives.

According to former CIA operative Jack Terrell, the Army went beyond surveillance. Terrell testified that his close friend J.D. Hill, who was part of the 20th Special Forces Group, confessed to him that he had been a member of an Army sniper team sent to Memphis to shoot an "unknown" target on April 4. The snipers were being transported to Memphis when their mission was suddenly cancelled.

Hill stated that upon learning of King's murder the next day, he realized that the team must have been part of a backup operation to kill King if another sniper failed.

The U.S. government's assassination of arguably "the greatest American who ever lived" signified that in violently propping up vicious right-wing dictatorships all over the Third World (as in Vietnam), the U.S. itself had become one - the biggest banana republic - with no possibility for peaceful social change.

Martin Luther King was a leader of international stature who spoke for the poor of the world and militantly confronted a system based on their slaughter. This pitted him against the most genocidal establishment on Earth. But the murder of King could not extinguish the power of his example.

Asad Ismi is author of "Canadian Investment in and Trade with Colombia," a forthcoming report.

"In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, as 'right to work.' It provides no 'rights' and no 'work.' Its purpose is to destroy labour unions and the freedom of collective bargainingWe demand that this fraud be stopped."
Martin Luther King, Jr.



On March 14, 1995, a lobby group calling itself the
Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation
kicked off yet another attempt to sell so-called
"Right-to-Work" laws in Saskatchewan.

This Business Group says it wants to defend the rights of workers,
but what is Right-to-Work (RTW) really all about?

In 21 American States, It's About*

- ◆ 18% lower wages
- ◆ 15% higher poverty rates
- ◆ 6% higher infant mortality
- ◆ 21% more job fatalities



Prairie Region

It's about bringing the culture of the cotton fields to Canada.

Say "No!" to the Saskatchewan Party's
"Right-to-Work" for Less
because
Workers' Rights Equals Healthy Communities

*from US Federal Government Statistics

opeiu-225

The Edmonton Raging Grannies formed in 1992 following the establishment of Raging Granny groups in Victoria, B.C. in 1987. There are similar groups active in most provinces in Canada as well as several U.S. states. As grandmothers, the Raging Grannies have many concerns, but this year they have been particularly active at rallies opposing Ralph Klein's Bill 11, which supports a greater role for privatized healthcare. The Grannies are well aware that the Canadian Alliance will initiate the privatization of Medicare at the federal level, hence their Stockwell Day songs. By singing songs of social significance, the Raging Grannies inspire all people who fight for social justice.

What a Friend we have in Stockwell

(Sung to the tune of *What a Friend we have in Jesus*)
lyrics by The Raging Grannies

What a friend we have in Stockwell
He wants everyone's respect
Show us how to walk on water
With a wet suit round his neck.

Now he's in the House of Commons
With media swooning at his feet
He's the man for all the poor folk
He's rejected the elite.

He has change his social outlook
Now respects pro-choice and gays
Tolerant of every viewpoint
Not like in those good old days.

His single tax is such a fair one
Just 10% off all our dough
He can't help it if the rich boys
Welcome him as friend not foe.

So...

Let us cheer for this
new leader
As he wallows in his
fame
And we hope that
very soon now
He'll take flight with-
out a plane!



Day O, Day O

(Sung to the tune of *Harry Bellefonte's Day-O*)
lyrics by The Raging Grannies

Day O, Day O
Stockwell's gone from Alberta's Dome,
Day O, Day O
Okanagan Coquihalla's now his home.

Patriarchal Pulp Fiction is his game plan,
Darkness come to Canadian Life,
Citizen's right to public funded health care,
Will be subject to Alliance Knife.

Stockwell come and he bring us fear,
He'll destroy what we hold dear,
We will fight him all the way
Canadians won't be swayed by Day.

Day O, Day O
Divide and conquer is his game
Day O, Day O
A weak central government, that's his aim.

Homophobic, anti-choice, spoken in a pious
voice,
Darkness come to Canadian Life,
Private education funded by the public,
Stockwell come and he bring us strife.

Day O, Day O
Stockwell come with his flat tax clout
Day O, Day O
People get together and vote him out!

The Edmonton Raging Grannies would be happy to help in the formation of Raging Granny groups in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Enquiries would be welcomed at 8902-120th Street, Edmonton, AB T6G 1X5. Phone: (780) 439-0445. E-mail: grannies@compusmart.ab.ca

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists
by Robert Tressell
Flamingo Modern Classic edition
Harper-Collins.

reviewed by Ruth Latta

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists is a disturbing book. It was recommended to me years ago by an Australian friend as a reader-friendly work about socialism. Last year, an elderly friend who grew up in the cotton mill towns of Lancashire let me browse through his personal library. There I discovered Robert Tressell's landmark novel, and eagerly borrowed it, only to find that the last two or three pages were missing.

This past summer, another friend brought me the Flamingo (Harper-Collins) Modern Classic edition from England. To my surprise, I saw that this book was more than twice as thick as the copy I'd had earlier.

It turns out that the Flamingo edition is the first full version published in paperback form. My Lancashire friend's earlier edition not only had been drastically cut, but, as Allan Sillitoe writes in his introduction, also had been "made to end on a note of despair, suggesting that the cranks who believed in Socialism could do nothing better than think of suicide."

The Flamingo edition is Robert Tressell's complete book, and ends as he intended. Tressell, who was born Robert Noonan in Dublin, took the name "Tressell" because painters and plasterers stand on trestles.

Tressell's education was cut short in his teens for financial and family reasons. He left home, lived for a while in South Africa, and returned to England in 1899, a widower with a young daughter, Kathleen.

In 1906-7, in Hastings, he began writing his novel in the evenings and on weekends while working a 56-hour week as a house painter. Completed in 1910, the manuscript was rejected by publishers because it was handwritten.

Tressell might have become a great Canadian writer. He set out for Liverpool in 1911, intending to immigrate to Canada and later send for his daughter, but he fell ill of lung trouble. He died in February 1911 and was buried in a pauper's grave, leaving nothing but his manuscript to Kathleen.

She became a nurse-governess, and through her

employer's connections, was introduced to the publisher Grant Richards. He bought all rights from her for 25 pounds and made publication conditional on the novel being cut from 250,000 words to 100,000. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was published in 1914 under conditions which constitute a writer's worst nightmare. Six chapters were discarded, and the musings about suicide from the middle were transplanted to the end.

In 1967, when the BBC screened a dramatization of the novel, Tressell's daughter, who was believed to be dead, came to light. She hadn't seen the film because she didn't own a television set.

The novel involves a year in the life of some working men in the town of "Mugsborough." Like John Bunyan and Charles Dickens, Tressell names his places and people to reflect their dominant characteristic. Human stories of family life are interspersed with workplace scenes, and discussions about the economic system. Tressell's book was the first English novel in which blue collar characters are presented, not as cartoons, but as human beings.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists is grittily realistic. Frank Owen, the central character, is haunted by the fear that he will die of tuberculosis while his son is still dependent upon him. Characters often pawn household possessions to put bread on the table: "They felt the loss of the bedclothes more than anything else, for although all the clothes they wore during the day and all the old clothes and dresses in the house... were put on the beds at night, they did not compensate for the blankets and they were often unable to sleep on account of the intense cold."

Owen tries to make his co-workers realize that they are being exploited, and calls them "philanthropists." Since "philanthropist" is a term usually applied to industrial tycoons, who donate a fraction of their profits to help others, how could these raggedly dressed wage slaves be benefactors? In Owen's view, workers not only earn their wages, but produce surplus value, which provides their employers with profits, so therefore are serving as philanthropists to their bosses.

This is an engaging novel in the realist tradition of *Les Miserables*. In our present age we are bombarded by the message that what is good for business is good for everybody. Read the unabridged version and decide whether it is relevant to today's world.

Case Critical:
Challenging Social Services in Canada
(Fourth Edition)
 by Ben Carniol
 Between the Lines, Toronto, 2000, \$21.95.

reviewed by Dave Broad

I have used previous editions of *Case Critical* as a text in my *Politics of Change* course, and found it to be a book that social workers seem to either love or hate. This comes as no surprise given the historical split of social work into two camps. The first camp consists of those who, drawing on the social reform heritage of the 1800s, pursue social work's potential to push for social change and social justice for the oppressed and exploited. The second camp includes those who, since the mid-1900s, have promoted a conservative professionalism and respectability for social work.

Ben Carniol is definitely of the first camp, arguing that "The hierarchical nature of social service organizations as they now operate means that 'clients' almost always come lowest in the pecking order. This book means to give clients a stronger voice - at the expense, justifiably, of the mainstream 'expert' voices of institutionalized management."

Carniol tells us that "social services are often used to paper over the cracks that have appeared over the years in the walls of an unjust society." While there are countless studies of the supposed "pathologies" of the poor and troubled, "there is a taboo against asking: To what extent are unemployment, poverty and basic inequalities directly or indirectly traceable to decisions made by a small group of people who possess the most power and wealth in the society?" This is exactly the question that Carniol addresses in his book, in order to make recommendations on how we might confront structural inequalities and promote social justice.

Carniol's beginning chapters trace the early period of social work and critique various schools of altruism. He then turns to a discussion of issues and problems that social workers face on the front line, including frustrations coming from already inadequate resources in the midst of neo-liberal economic cutbacks alongside increasing caseloads. These are certainly problems that Saskatchewan social workers share with others, as attested to by recent meetings of child welfare and income security workers petitioning the provincial government, and protesting the stresses of being overworked and finding themselves "processing clients" rather than doing "real social work."

Some of these problems are endemic to a



professionalization that entails bureaucracies and hierarchies and applications of new business management techniques and privatization of services. Carniol also discusses how this conservative professionalization of social work tends to devalue the humanity and individual and social capacities of "cli-

ents," increasingly referred to in the literature (and occasionally by Carniol as well) as "consumers," who suffer the indignities of being processed and not being treated as full citizens. An important contribution of the book is the documentation Carniol uses to allow these citizens to speak for themselves.

Carniol's final chapter outlines a number of means which social workers might use to promote social justice by restructuring relations between social workers and service users, creating alternative social services, encouraging social action groups, and working with labour unions and social change movements.

Unfortunately, the new edition of the book has been infected by a virus that has crept into social work education and practice in general. Carniol adds discussions of "postmodernism" and "identity politics" to his last chapter and, while noting the pitfalls of these recent intellectual fashions, he tends to be sympathetic to them. The problem is that these fashions contradict the structural critique and thrust of Carniol's book.

I will continue to use Carniol's book as a text for my *Politics of Change* course and, who knows, perhaps the material on postmodernism and identity politics in the new edition will make for fruitful discussion of how to deal with problems of systemic oppression and exploitation (or not).

Dave Broad teaches in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina.

Stolen Harvest:

The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply

by Vandana Shiva

South End Press, #1-7 Brookline Street, Cambridge MA 02139-4146, USA, 2000.

reviewed by Beth Clarke

If you read only one book this year, make it this one. Why? Because it's about an issue that critically affects us all. At least those of us who need to eat food to survive.

Taking several examples from India, where she best knows the impact of the global food economy, Vandana Shiva draws the lines between local examples and how multinational corporations and bodies such as the World Trade Organization are operating to control the global food supply. As Shiva says, these are places where the "hungry starve as land and water provides luxuries for rich consumers in the North."

For people who don't know that much about the issues of genetically engineered crops, the globalization of the food economy and the monopoly of the seed harvest by corporations, this book is very easy to read and understand. Shiva makes the book accessible by providing the reader with tangible examples to make her case.

If you think that you're too busy to read it, as I did, the book is full of short sections covering a variety of different issues, examples and information. It's easy to pick up and put down the book, as you will always be drawn back in with yet another excellent example. In addition, there is a great deal of information even for those who are quite knowledgeable on these issues.

One issue that's well covered is the globalization of the seed system. Ten corporations currently control 32 percent of the commercial seed market and 100 percent of genetically engineered seeds.

They control much of this seed by patents, by claiming seeds and plants as their inventions and therefore their property. Monsanto owns the entire production process - from breeding to cultivation to sale - of all herbicide resistant plants including corn, wheat, rice, soybean, cotton, sugar, beet, oilseed, rape, canola, flax, sunflower, potato, tobacco, alfalfa,

poplar, pine, apple and grape.

In order to prevent farmers from saving seeds from year to year, corporations have created sterile seeds in order to, as they state, control plant gene expression. Therefore the seeds that farmers save from one year to the next will not grow, and farmers who can't afford it will be forced to buy new seeds each year.

Shiva also mentions the damage of the four largest luxury crops grown in India for export to consumers in the North: flowers, fruits, shrimp and meat. India can only buy one-quarter of the food it could have grown in exchange for the earnings from its floriculture exports. For every \$1 earned from meat exports, India is destroying \$15 worth of ecological functions performed by these same animals for sustainable agriculture. For every acre of industrial shrimp farms, 200 acres of productive ecosystems are destroyed.

If you are still not convinced that you need to read this book, think about the food that you eat. If you eat soybeans or soy products, there is a section on whether or not they are good for your health. Along with this is the story of how mustard seed oil has been replaced by soybean oil, a good example of how corporations are replacing diversity and indigenous survival with their agenda. The book also addresses the risk that genetically engineered food and the lack of biodiversity has on our health and on that of the generation being born right now.

I remember waiting for the end of the book, for the solutions to all I was reading about, and then feeling disappointed that there was no quick fix to the global corporate monopoly on food. But how can there be an easy solution?

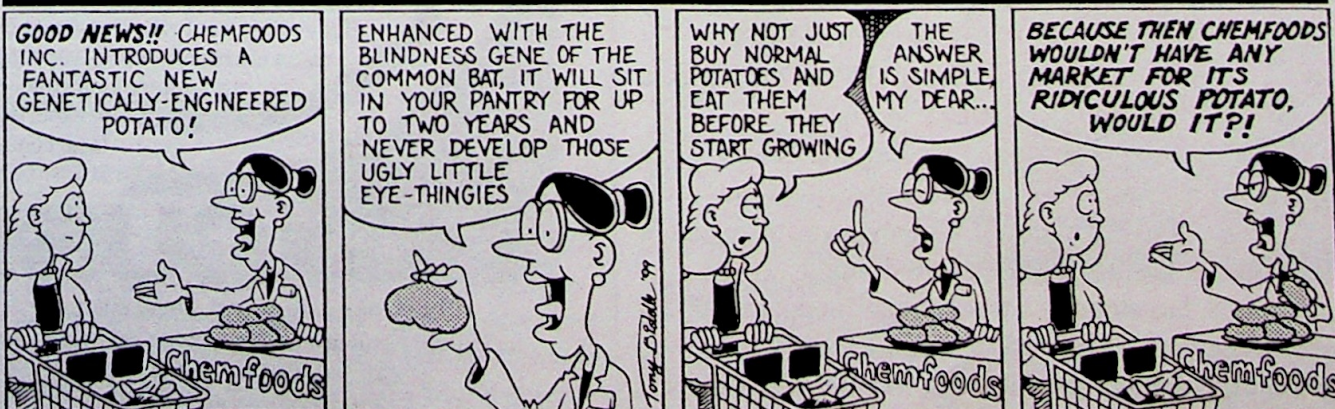
For those of us with the privilege to read the book, we also have the privilege to make consumer choices that could change the situation. Shiva believes that is a major role for the North and as she also points out, the fight has begun, in Saskatchewan, in North American, in India.

Really, what choice do we have? Shiva's book has given me the information and the imperative to act.

Beth Clarke is concerned about the impact of corporate control and biotechnology on the global food system and on her family and friends around the world.

THE REST OF US

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Rogue State:

A Guide to the World's only Superpower
by William Blum

Common Courage Press, Monroe, ME, 2000, US\$16.95
(or send US\$18 to William Blum, #707-5100 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008-2064 for a post-paid autographed copy).

reviewed by Terry Wolfwood

There is, of course, only one rogue state: the United States of America. Blum, a journalist and former U.S. State Department official, describes and gives references to every evil U.S. deed that an activist can imagine in his or her wildest dreams.

In spite of the efforts of U.S. leaders to make their actions appear humanitarian and democratic, Blum makes it clear that the U.S. has run a global protection racket based on four imperatives: making the world hospitable for globalization, particularly American-based corporations; enriching defense contractors who donate generously to politicians; preventing the rise of any society that might serve as an alternative to capitalism; and extending political, economic and military hegemony over the world while creating a world order in America's image.

Part I makes the connection between supporting terrorism abroad that are in the interests of the U.S., from Cambodia and Afghanistan, to the School of the Americas and the CIA, as well as the criminal "justice" system at home.

Careful research by Blum reveals that the U.S. invented the Soviet threat to justify NATO. Now it extends NATO and military control with implausible scenarios to "rogue states," terrorism and drugs. He documents U.S. military interventions since 1945 and shows that the U.S. has its military forces in more than 100 countries today.

There are enough documented quotes by U.S. leaders to keep *Briarpatch's* "Say What?" section in material for years.

Part II covers U.S. weapons of mass destruction from Hiroshima to the use of depleted uranium in Iraq and Yugoslavia. Blum presents a long list of the use of chemical and biological weapons abroad and in the U.S.

Part III is called "The American Empire: Coming soon to a country near you." Blum lists military and political interventions all over the world. Wherever you go, the U.S. has been there, done that, and is still doing it.

The U.S. has stood as a true "rogue" in dozens of UN General Assembly votes, often supported only by Israel, and a handful of other faithful allies, like Canada. The U.S.

even voted against the right to food as a human right.

Blum compares electronic eavesdropping to "a mammoth vacuum cleaner in the sky," with the National Security Agency sucking it all up, invading the privacy of very citizen in the world.

He also writes about U.S. government-sanctioned kidnapping and involvement with drugs, while the marginalized in the U.S. are treated like criminals.

Even when the truth is revealed, Blum says that "being the World's Superpower means never having to say you're sorry" because this powerful empire is based on repression at home and abroad.

How does the U.S. get away with it? Blum says the world-wide love affair with America is the result of a media as powerful as the military that glorifies the U.S. everywhere.

He quotes Goethe: "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free."

Blum says most Americans do not yet recognize the consequences of their government's deeds. This book provides a guide to a trip every activist should take.

Terry Wolfwood works for the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation in Victoria, B.C. E-mail: bbcf@islandnet.com

CUSO is looking for Canadians with skills and experience in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, environment, and community activism to work in volunteer programmes in some thirty countries world-wide. Standard contracts: 2 years, plus language training, basic cost of living and benefits.

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SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

"The reason I am called right-wing today is only because the spirit of our times is left-wing and most of our elites, including the media, are imbued with this spirit. They rarely see enemies on the left. But that's where most contemporary McCarthy's are."

- Barbara Amiel,
Maclean's magazine, March 20, 2000.

THOUGHTFUL & INTELLIGENT?

"I believe that we are heading into a watershed election. Two key issues will be health care and taxation, and on those issues I believe the Canadian Alliance can contribute to a thoughtful and intelligent debate."

- Anthony Fell,
chairman of RBC Dominion Securities and co-chair of the inaugural Canadian Alliance dinner in October in Toronto. The price per ten-person table ranges from \$6,000 per table to \$25,000 per table. Globe and Mail, September 18, 2000.

HE LEANED TO THE LEFT?

"He [Ken Ellis] seems to be a positive young individual. I can remember when I was that age, I leaned toward socialistic thinking."

- Stockwell Day,
referring to Ken Ellis, the Okanagan-Coquihalla NDP candidate. Globe and Mail, August 21, 2000.

GAG LAW

"Gary Doer's gag law [is] waging a war against freedom."
- National Citizens' Coalition.

The government of Manitoba has banned corporate and union contributions to political candidates and parties. While the NCC calls the legislation "a war against freedom," the NCC's by-law 27 states: "Public members shall not be entitled to receive notice of, or to attend any meeting of the Corporation and shall not be entitled to vote at any such meeting." Now that's freedom.



Say What??



THE DUBYA IN POUTINE

"He understands I want to make sure our relations with our most important neighbour to the north of us, the Canadians, is strong and we'll work closely together."

- George W. Bush,

Republican candidate for U.S. President, responding to This Hour Has 22 Minutes satirist Rick Mercer's statement that "Canadian Prime Minister Jean Poutine" had endorsed Bush "as the man to lead the free world into the 21st century."

ALIENS IN THE WHITE HOUSE

"I further hope that Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman are elected as it would increase anti-Semitism dramatically and further erode the supposed legitimacy of the government. The more Jewish the government obviously is, the more the people will wish to overthrow such an alien government."

- Matthew Hale,
head of the World Church of the Creator. Globe and Mail, August 9, 2000.



Politics & Mental Health

by Christian Stuhr

Twenty-five years ago or so, I had just finished college in upstate New York and was moving to Canada. The American wars in Southeast Asia had something to do with my decision, but they were not the main reason. A professor friend had recommended Canada as a good place for further studies.

My awareness of the Vietnam War was to change soon. The killing escalated, the political situation deteriorated, and I was shaken by the rising death toll. Remember - the dead included not only uncounted Vietnamese, but also my high school friends. By 1966, I had become totally disgusted with American adventurism and became a landed immigrant in Canada. I was prepared never to go home again.

That was fine, I told myself. Home is here. My parents approved, and my girlfriend Louise came to join me. Their support was much needed because I was a troubled man. I could not avoid the enormity of what I had done, and developed a morbid obsession with being a target for American retaliation. How far would those maniacs running my draft board in New Jersey go? Would they harass my parents? Or worse, Louise's? Would Canada face grave retaliation unless my fellow exiles and I were deported back to the U.S.? Would their agents infiltrate Canada to take us by force, as the Israelis had taken Eichmann in Argentina? I'm not making this up - these thoughts haunted me.

The stress took a toll all its own. My studies suffered, and my relationship with Louise fell apart. Eventually I sought out a physician, a sympathetic GP who immediately referred me to a psychiatrist. The treatment consisted of about one part psychotherapy to three parts of antidepressants. But it worked, more or less.

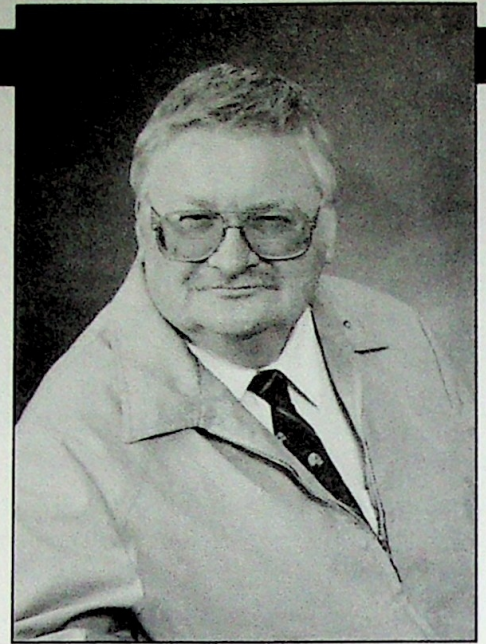
In time, I took up respectable employment here, gratefully accepted



Canadian citizenship, and got over my break-up with Louise to marry a Canadian woman who had two Canadian children with me. Sure, I could have served my time in the U.S. Army and gone on to well-paid work in the U.S. military-industrial complex. Instead, I took up teaching. This work has not rewarded me with fabulous wealth, but at least I know that I probably did more good than harm during my working life.

* * * * *

The mental stresses during my early years in Canada had been great. Some Canadians condemned Vietnam-era



refugees from the U.S. as a pack of traitors, a gang of cowards who were traitors to their country and sinners against a righteous God who hates Communism. A few still think this.

But by taking my stand, I avoided a greater evil. Because if I had not said "No" to my draft board, I might well have found myself in a platoon led by the likes of Lieutenant William Calley, moving into a place like My Lai. For U.S. domestic consumption - and until this became patently absurd - we would be glorified as conquering heroes. And having gone along that far, I would probably have obeyed my commanding officer and wasted my expected share of what many GIs called gooks.

But that way lies moral insanity. Few who are struck by it are ever cured. It is an insanity that is beyond the reach of psychotherapy.

Christian Stuhr received a B.A. from Cornell University in 1964, and moved to Canada that fall.

My Opinion does not necessarily represent the editorial views of Briarpatch. We welcome submissions and encourage any ensuing dialogue.

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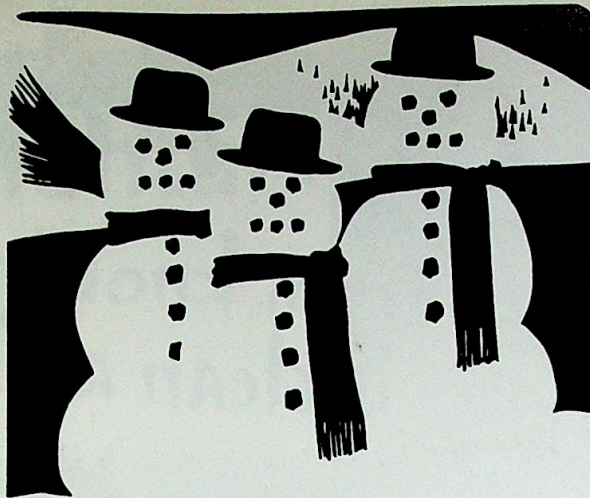


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